United Nations A/53/PV.91

General Assembly
Fifty-third Session

Official Records

91st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 15 December 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mungra (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Reports of the Second Committee

The Acting President: This morning, the General Assembly will consider the reports of the Second Committee on agenda items 91 to 98 and 12. I request the Rapporteur of the Second Committee, Mr. Uladzimir Gerus of Belarus, to introduce the reports of the Second Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Gerus (Belarus), Rapporteur of the Second Committee: It is my honour to introduce the reports of the Second Committee to the General Assembly. I take pleasure first in introducing the report of the Second Committee on agenda item 12, entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council", which the Assembly has before it in document A/53/605.

Paragraph 18 of that document contains three draft resolutions, and paragraph 19 contains two draft decisions recommended by the Committee for adoption by the Assembly.

The Assembly also has before it the report of the Second Committee on item 91, entitled "Macroeconomic policy questions", in document A/53/606 and addenda 1 to 5. Document A/53/606 contains the introduction to the item.

The report on sub-item (a), "Trade and development", is contained in document A/53/606/Add.1. Paragraph 10 of that document contains two draft resolutions, and paragraph 11 contains one draft decision recommended by the Committee for adoption by the Assembly.

Under sub-item (b), entitled "Financing of development, including net transfer of resources between developing and developed countries", the Second Committee, in paragraph 10 of document A/53/606/Add.2, recommends the adoption of two draft resolutions, and in paragraph 11 the adoption of one draft decision.

In paragraph 7 of document A/53/606/Add.3, the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of one draft resolution under sub-item (c), "Commodities".

I would like to bring to the attention of the Assembly a small correction to operative paragraph 24 of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 7 of document A/53/606/Add.4, submitted under sub-item (d), "External debt crisis and development". In operative paragraph 24, on line 4, the word "including" should be inserted after the word "resources". With this small correction, the Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of this draft resolution.

In paragraph 6 of document A/53/606/Add.5, the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly

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This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

the adoption of one draft resolution which is not related to any specific sub-item. This draft resolution is entitled "Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence".

The General Assembly also has before it the report of the Second Committee on agenda item 92, entitled "Sectoral policy questions", which is contained in document A/53/607. Paragraph 14 of that document contains one draft resolution under sub-item (a), "Business and development", and one draft resolution under sub-item (b), "Industrial development cooperation", which the Committee recommends for adoption by the Assembly.

Under agenda item 93, "Sustainable development and international economic cooperation", the Assembly has before it the report of the Second Committee contained in document A/53/608 and addenda 1 to 7. Document A/53/608 contains the introduction to the item and a list of documents before the Committee.

In paragraph 6 of document A/53/608/Add.1, the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of one draft resolution under sub-item (a), "Implementation of and follow-up to major consensus agreements on development".

Under sub-item (b), entitled "Integration of the economies in transition into the world economy", the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly, in paragraph 5 of document A/53/608/Add.2, the adoption of one draft resolution.

In paragraph 10 of document A/53/608/Add.3, the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of one draft resolution, and in paragraph 11, the adoption of one draft decision under sub-item (c), "Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)".

Under sub-item (d), "Renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership", in paragraph 9 of document A/53/608/Add.4, the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of one draft resolution, and in paragraph 10 of the same document, the adoption of one draft decision.

In paragraph 5 of document A/53/608/Add.5, the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of one draft resolution under sub-item (e), "Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s".

Document A/53/608/Add.6 contains the report of the Second Committee on sub-item (f), "Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development". Operative paragraphs 4 and 5 of the draft resolution on this sub-item should be corrected by replacing "thirty-third" with "thirty-second". The next session of the Commission on Population and Development is the thirty-second session to be held in March 1999. Paragraph 10 of that document recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of one draft resolution, and paragraph 11, the adoption of one draft decision.

In paragraph 5 of document A/53/608/Add.7, the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of one draft resolution under sub-item (g), "Cultural development".

The General Assembly also has before it the report of the Second Committee on item 94, entitled "Environment and sustainable development", which is contained in documents A/53/609 and Addenda 1 to 6.

Document A/53/609 contains the introduction to the item and a list of documents before the Committee.

Under sub-item (a), entitled "Implementation of and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, including the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21", the Second Committee, in paragraph 6 of document A/53/609/Add.1, recommends the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under sub-item (b), entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind", the Assembly has before it document A/53/609/Add.2, which contains, in paragraph 3, one draft decision recommended for adoption.

In paragraph 6 of document A/53/609/Add.3, submitted under sub-item (c), entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States", the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of one draft resolution.

In paragraph 6 of document A/53/609/Add.4, submitted under sub-item (d), entitled "Convention on Biological Diversity", the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of one draft resolution.

In paragraph 7 of document A/53/609/Add.5, submitted under sub-item (e), entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa", the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of one draft resolution.

In paragraph 18 of document A/53/609/Add.6, the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of three draft resolutions which are not related to a specific sub-item. In paragraph 19 of the same document, the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of one draft decision.

Under agenda item 95, entitled "Operational activities for development", the Assembly has before it the report of the Second Committee contained in document A/53/610. I should like to bring to the attention of the General Assembly three corrections to be made to this document. First, in the third line of the first preambular paragraph of draft resolution I, the word "and" should be deleted. In the eighth line of paragraph 16 of draft resolution I, "board" should read "boards". In the second line of paragraph 22 of draft resolution I, "Nations" should read "Nations'".

With those corrections, the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of two draft resolutions contained in paragraph 13 and one draft decision contained in paragraph 14 of document A/53/610.

The Assembly also has before it the report of the Second Committee under agenda item 96, entitled "Training and research", which is contained in document A/53/611. Paragraph 14 of that document contains one draft resolution under sub-item (a), "United Nations University"; and one draft resolution under sub-item (b), "United Nations Institute for Training and Research", which are recommended for adoption by the General Assembly.

The Assembly also has before it document A/53/612, which contains the report of the Second Committee on agenda item 97, entitled "Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources". Paragraph 11 contains one draft resolution, which was adopted by the Second Committee by a recorded vote and is recommended to the Assembly for adoption.

Under agenda item 98, entitled "Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)", the Assembly has before it the report of the Second Committee contained in document A/53/613. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of two draft resolutions contained in paragraph 14 of that document and one draft decision, which is contained in paragraph 15.

I should like to inform the General Assembly that, during this session, the Second Committee adopted 36 draft substantive proposals. These proposals should be considered to be significant contributions of the Second Committee to the process of revitalization of the United Nations activities in the economic and environmental fields. The Committee tried to promote the establishment of favourable conditions for the sustainable development of all nations of the world, developed and developing, economies in transition, small island States and landlocked countries. We have come to agreement on 32 draft resolutions.

Now I should like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Second Committee for their contribution to the work of the Committee and to thank the Chairman, Mr. Bagher Asadi, and the three Vice-Chairmen, Mr. David Prendergast of Jamaica, Mr. Burak Özügergin of Turkey and Mr. Odyek Agona of Uganda, for their efforts in successfully completing the work of the Committee. My thanks also go to the members of the Secretariat for their assistance and endurance.

I have the honour to submit the reports of the Second Committee to the General Assembly for consideration.

The Acting President: The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Second Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind Members States that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote

only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Second Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Second Committee. This means that where a recorded vote was taken, we will do the same, unless the Secretariat has been notified otherwise in advance.

I should also hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote the recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Second Committee.

Agenda item 91

Macroeconomic policy questions

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/606 and Add.5)

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the report of the Second Committee contained in document A/53/606?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: We now turn to the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/53/606/Add.5.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/169).

(a) Trade and development

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/606/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 10 of its report and on one draft decision recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 11 of the same document.

The Assembly will turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "International trade and development".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution I. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/170).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Transit environment in the landlocked States in Central Asia and their transit developing neighbours".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution II. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/171).

The Acting President: We turn now to the draft decision, entitled "Documents relating to trade and development".

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision as recommended by the Second Committee?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 91?

It was so decided.

(b) Financing of development, including net transfer of resources between developing and developed countries

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/606/Add.2)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 10 of its report and on the draft decision recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 11 of the same report.

The Assembly will first turn to draft resolution I, entitled "The financial crisis and its impact on growth and development, especially in the developing countries".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution I. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/172).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "High- level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution II. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/173).

The Acting President: We turn now to the draft decision, entitled "Documents relating to the financing of development".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 91?

It was so decided.

(c) Commodities

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/606/Add.3)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/174).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 91?

It was so decided.

(d) External debt crisis and development

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/606/Add.4)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The draft resolution is entitled "Enhancing international cooperation towards a durable solution to the external debt problem of developing countries". May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution as orally corrected by the Rapporteur?

The draft resolution as orally corrected was adopted (resolution 53/175).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 91?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 91 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 92

Sectoral policy questions

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/607)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on two draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 14 of its report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Action against corruption and bribery in international commercial transactions".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution I. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution I?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/176).

The Acting President: We next turn to draft resolution II, entitled "Industrial development cooperation".

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution II. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution II?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/177).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 92?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 93 (*continued*)

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/608)

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the report of the Second Committee as contained in document A/53/608?

It was so decided.

(a) Implementation of and follow-up to major consensus agreements on development

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/608/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Implementation of the commitments and policies agreed upon in the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, and implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade".

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/178).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 93?

It was so decided.

(b) Integration of the economies in transition into the world economy

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/608/Add.2)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 5 of its report.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/179).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 93?

It was so decided.

(c) Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/608/Add.3)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 10 of its report and on the draft decision recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 11 of the same report.

We turn first to the draft resolution, entitled "Special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda".

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/180).

The Acting President: I now invite representatives to turn to the draft decision, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the assessment of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements".

The Second Committee adopted the draft decision. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 93?

It was so decided.

(d) Renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership

Report of the Second Committee (A/52/608/Add.4)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 9 of its report and on the draft decision recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 10 of the same report.

We turn first to the draft resolution, entitled "Renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership".

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/181).

The Acting President: We shall now turn to the draft decision, entitled "Documents relating to renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership".

The Second Committee adopted the draft decision. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 93?

It was so decided.

(e) Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/608/Add.5)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 5 of its report.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/182).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (e) of agenda item 93?

It was so decided.

(f) Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/608/Add.6)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 10 of its report and on the draft decision recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 11 of the same report.

We turn first to the draft resolution, entitled "Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development", as orally corrected by the Rapporteur.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution, as orally corrected by the Rapporteur?

The draft resolution, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 53/183).

The Acting President: We shall now turn to the draft decision, entitled "Commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the United Nations Population Fund".

The Second Committee adopted the draft decision. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 93.

(g) Cultural development

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/608/Add.7)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 5 of its report.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/184).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 93?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 94

Environment and sustainable development

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/609 and Add.6)

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the report of the Second Committee on agenda item 94 contained in document A/53/609?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: We now turn to the draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 18 of its report contained in document 53/609/Add.6 and on the draft decision recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 19 of the same report.

The Second Committee adopted draft resolution I, entitled "International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon". May I take it that the Assembly decides to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/185).

The Acting President: The Second Committee adopted draft resolution II, entitled "International institutional arrangements related to environment and development". May I take it that the Assembly decides to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/186).

The Acting President: The Second Committee adopted draft resolution III, entitled "Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme". May I take it that the Assembly decides to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 53/187).

The Acting President: We turn now to the draft decision, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on products harmful to health and the environment".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt the draft decision as recommended by the Second Committee?

The draft decision was adopted.

(a) Implementation of and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, including the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/609/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft resolution is entitled "Implementation of and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly".

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/188).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 94?

It was so decided.

(b) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/609/Add.2)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 3 of its report.

The draft decision, entitled "Report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change", was adopted by the Second Committee.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision as recommended by the Committee?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 94?

It was so decided.

(c) Implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/609/Add.3)

The Acting President: I will now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

Mr. Rønneberg (Marshall Islands): At the outset, I wish to thank the Rapporteur of the Second Committee for his hard work and for his reports to the General Assembly.

The convening next year of a special session to review the implementation of the Barbados Conference is of extreme importance to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and indeed to all small island developing States. For this reason, my delegation is extremely disappointed that the Second Committee could not find an equitable solution to the issue of the representation of those States which are not Members of the United Nations.

As the draft resolution is currently drafted, these States will be able to be present only as observers, even though they are independent and sovereign States and did participate as full members in the Barbados Conference itself. My delegation sees this as further evidence of the increasing marginalization of small island developing States, and we deeply regret that the General Assembly is about to endorse this state of affairs.

My delegation has regretfully decided to accept the consensus which has been forced on us by a minority in the Committee for reasons that we believe were unrelated to the particular draft resolution. We have been forced to

accept this consensus for the sake of retaining other important aspects of the draft resolution.

My delegation will work closely with the delegations of the small island developing States affected by the situation so that their participation in the special session and in its preparatory process will be more meaningful than that which has been envisaged by the small minority.

Ms. Hawkins (Australia): Australia is pleased to have been a sponsor of the draft resolution on the implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

We wish, however, to register our disappointment that the draft resolution was not able to ensure the full participation of small island developing States that are not Members of the United Nations in the special session review of the Barbados Programme of Action, despite great efforts by several fellow sponsors to find a solution, which we greatly appreciate.

We would nonetheless request that all will be done to facilitate the participation of small island developing States that are not United Nations Members to the fullest extent possible to ensure a successful review.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/189).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 94.

(d) Convention on Biological Diversity

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/609/Add.4)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/53/609/Add.4).

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/190).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 94?

It was so decided.

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/609/Add.5)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 7 of its report (A/53/609/Add.5).

The draft resolution was adopted by the Second Committee. May I take it that the Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/191).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (e) of agenda item 94?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 95

Operational activities for development

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/610)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 13 of its report (A/53/610) and on the draft decision recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 14 of the same report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system", as orally corrected by the Rapporteur.

Draft resolution I was adopted by the Second Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution I, as orally corrected by the Rapporteur?

Draft resolution I, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 53/192).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II, entitled "Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2001 to review the achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children", was adopted by the Second Committee. May I take it that the Assembly too wishes to adopt draft resolution II?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/193).

The Acting President: We turn now to the draft decision, entitled "Documents relating to operational activities for development". May I consider that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 95?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 96

Training and research

(a) United Nations University

(b) United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/611)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 14 of its report (A/53/611).

Draft resolution I, entitled "United Nations University", was adopted by the Second Committee. May I consider that the Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/194).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II, entitled "United Nations Institute for Training and Research", was adopted by the Second Committee. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/195).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 96?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 97

Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/612)

The Acting President: The Assembly will take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 11 of its report (A/53/612).

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco,

Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Bahamas, Barbados, Cameroon, El Salvador, Fiji, Georgia, Grenada, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Paraguay, Swaziland, Uzbekistan

The draft resolution was adopted by 144 votes to 2, with 12 abstentions (resolution 53/196).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 97?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 98

Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/613)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 14 of its report (A/53/613) and on the draft decision recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 15 of the same report.

I call on the representative of Bangladesh, who wishes to speak in explanation of position before action is taken on these texts.

Mr. Sorcar (Bangladesh): At the 31st meeting of the Second Committee, held on 2 November 1998, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Nitin Desai, made a statement to introduce and explain the report of the Secretary-General on the role of microcredit in the eradication of poverty, documents A/53/223 and A/53/223/Add.1. The text of that statement was subsequently issued on 15 November 1998 annexed to a note by the Secretariat, document A/C.2/53/7. That document elaborates some of the points in the report of the Secretary-General; it should be viewed as an integral part of that report, and the two should be considered together.

The preference of the Bangladesh delegation would have been to appropriately adjust the text of the draft decision recommended in paragraph 15 of document A/53/613 to take this into account. However, owing to time constraints, we went along with the decision to recommend the draft decision to the Assembly. At the same time, however, we would like the General Assembly to take note both of documents A/53/223 and A/53/223/Add.1 and of document A/C.2/53/7.

The Acting President: We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "International Year of Microcredit, 2005".

Draft resolution I was adopted by the Second Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/197).

The Acting President: The Second Committee adopted draft resolution II, entitled "Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/198).

The Acting President: We turn now to the draft decision, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the role of microcredit in the eradication of poverty".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision as recommended by the Second Committee?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 98?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 12 (*continued*)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Second Committee (A/53/605)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now proceed to take a decision on the three draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 18 of its report and on the two draft decisions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 19 of the same report.

I shall put the recommendations of the Second Committee to the Assembly one by one. After all the decisions have been taken, representatives will again have the opportunity to explain their votes or positions.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Proclamation of international years", which the Second Committee adopted. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/199).

The Acting President: The Second Committee adopted draft resolution II, entitled "Proclamation of 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/200).

The Acting President: The Second Committee adopted draft resolution III, entitled "Public administration and development". May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 53/201).

The Acting President: We will now turn to the two draft decisions recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 19 of its report.

Draft decision I is entitled "Documents relating to the report of the Economic and Social Council".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision I?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The Acting President: Draft decision II is entitled "Biennial programme of work of the Second Committee for 1999-2000".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision II?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of the chapters of the report of the Economic and Social Council allocated to the Second Committee?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of all the reports of the Second Committee before it.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.

United Nations

A/53/PV.92

General Assembly

Fifty-third Session

Official Records

92nd plenary meeting
Thursday, 17 December 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Agenda item 30 (*continued*)

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Draft resolution (A/53/L.73)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should now like to consult the Assembly with a view to considering immediately draft resolution A/53/L.73.

In this connection, since document A/53/L.73 has only been circulated this morning, it would be necessary to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the Assembly's rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

> "As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting."

Unless I hear any objections, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to consider draft resolution A/53/L.73.

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/53/L.73.

As there are no speakers on the list, the Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/53/L.73, entitled "The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/53/L.73?

Draft resolution A/53/L.73 was adopted (resolution 53/202).

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of the United States of America.

Ms. Montoya (United States of America): While we are considering agenda item 30 today, I would like to make clear my delegation's deep disappointment and grave concern that the General Assembly has thus far failed to address its responsibilities, as set out in the report to the Secretary-General by the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements. Our delegation believes that we have a duty to work with our partners here in the General Assembly to assist and support reform efforts to be undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Commission on Human Settlements. Full consideration of this agenda item cannot be delayed. As such, we would like to join our partners in regular and transparent consultations aimed at moving the reform process

98-86728 (E)

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forward. My delegation strongly believes that a failure to do so, or to adopt a decision calling for the same in this body, would unnecessarily delay reform efforts undertaken by UNEP and the Commission, which would be to the grave detriment of their continuing operation.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): In connection with the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements contained in document A/53/463 and issued under item 30, I should like to assure members that the General Assembly will continue its consideration of the report in a fully open and transparent manner early next year.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 30.

Agenda item 3 (*continued*)

Credentials of representatives to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly

(b) Second report of the Credentials Committee (A/53/556/Add.1)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 11 of its report reads as follows:

"*The General Assembly,*

"*Having considered* the second report of the Credentials Committee and the recommendation contained therein,

"*Approves* the second report of the Credentials Committee."

We shall now take action on the recommendation of the Credentials Committee set forth in paragraph 11 of the second report.

The Credentials Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/23 C).

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 3.

Agenda item 12 (*continued*)

Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/53/3)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): Members will recall that chapters I to VII and sections A to C of chapter VIII, and chapters IX and X of the report of the Economic and Social Council were assigned for consideration directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to take note of chapters I to VII and sections A to C of chapter VIII, and chapters IX and X of the report of the Economic and Social Council?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 12?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Draft resolution (A/53/L.72)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Senegal to introduce draft resolution A/53/L.72.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): I should like, on behalf of the Group of African States, to introduce draft resolution A/53/L.72 on emergency assistance to the Sudan under item 20 (b) of the agenda of the General Assembly.

The African Group, meeting in plenary, decided to submit this draft resolution, which is one of the group of resolutions dealing with humanitarian situations in Africa.

The draft resolution, while noting with appreciation the increased contributions for 1998 in response to the inter-agency appeal for the Sudan, emphasizes the considerable relief needs that remain to be addressed, in

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particular in the area of food and of the fight against various illnesses and epidemics.

The draft resolution draws attention to the disastrous consequences of the floods that occurred in various parts of the country in 1998. While calling for an early resolution to the conflict in order to put an end to the suffering of the civilian population, the draft resolution reaffirms the need for all parties to continue to facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations in the supply of food and medicines to affected peoples in remote areas.

The draft resolution acknowledges with appreciation the cooperation of the Government of the Sudan with the United Nations with a view to facilitating relief operations in the affected areas, and it encourages the continuation of that cooperation. The General Assembly also expresses its appreciation to the donor community, United Nations agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations for their past and future contributions to the humanitarian needs of the Sudan.

While recognizing the need for neutrality and impartiality in humanitarian activities, the draft resolution stresses that Operation Lifeline Sudan should operate within the principle of national sovereignty and the framework of international cooperation in accordance with the provisions of international law. The draft resolution also calls upon the donor community and the agencies of the United Nations system to provide financial, medical and technical assistance and substantially to increase, to the extent possible, such assistance to combat diseases and epidemics in the Sudan.

The draft resolution stresses the imperative of ensuring the safety of humanitarian personnel as well as the need for access to remote areas in order to provide relief to all affected populations, while observing the principles and guidelines of Operation Lifeline Sudan and of international humanitarian law.

Finally, the draft resolution welcomes the signing by the Government of the Sudan of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Landmines and on Their Destruction, and urges all parties to the conflict to desist from using them. It also calls on the international community to refrain from supplying mines to parties in conflict in the region and to make every effort to provide the necessary demining assistance to the Sudan.

I have the pleasure of informing the Assembly that this draft resolution is the result of intensive and painstaking consultations with the donor countries under the chairmanship of Ambassador Jørgen Bøjer, Permanent Representative of Denmark and coordinator of humanitarian resolutions under agenda item 20, and I thank him on behalf of the Group of African States and in particular on behalf of the Sudan.

This text was agreed upon by all the delegations providing humanitarian assistance to the Sudan, in particular the countries of the European Union, the United States, Canada, Norway, Australia and Japan. I should like, on behalf of the African Group, to thank all of those countries for their constructive contribution to the drafting of this text, which, I hope, will be adopted by the Assembly by consensus.

In so doing, the Assembly will demonstrate once again its support for and its solidarity with the Sudan, which is currently affected by a very alarming humanitarian situation.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should now like to consult the Assembly with a view to considering immediately draft resolution A/53/L.72. In this connection, since document A/53/L.72 has been circulated only this morning, it would be necessary to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

> "As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting."

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to consider draft resolution A/53/L.72.

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/53/L.72, entitled "Emergency assistance to the Sudan".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/53/L.72?

Draft resolution A/53/L.72 was adopted (resolution 53/10).

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Ms. Montoya (United States of America): My delegation joins consensus on the resolution concerning humanitarian assistance to the Sudan because of the need to ensure that the international community is sufficiently seized with the humanitarian tragedy affecting that country. We continue to have concerns about the Government of the Sudan's cooperation in facilitating the delivery of relief assistance.

The United States recalls that Sudan's denial of flight clearances to Bahr-el-Ghazal in February through April of this year contributed to the devastating famine that placed 2.5 million Sudanese at risk of starvation. We urge the Government of Sudan to ensure this does not happen again. We call on Khartoum to fulfil its commitment at the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peace talks in May to provide free and unhindered access for the delivery of humanitarian supplies, as called for in the resolution adopted today.

In specific terms, that includes the following: granting clearances for all relief flights on a timely basis or explaining clearly why any have been refused; providing access for a United Nations assessment team to the Nuba Mountains — then-Foreign Minister Taha agreed to do so in a meeting with Secretary-General Annan in May 1998, and Khartoum reaffirmed that offer at the August peace talks, yet that commitment remains unfulfilled; fulfilling its commitment to provide ten thousand metric tons of food commodities to the relief effort, particularly given the fact that Sudan exports one million tons of sorghum annually; simplifying the monthly procedure for relief flights, making it easier for relief workers to travel to affected areas, and instituting a clear policy on communications equipment for humanitarian personnel.

We also urge the Government of the Sudan to implement fully the agreements signed with the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in Rome in mid-November, providing for increased security for relief workers and providing a framework for increased use of rail corridors and cross-line food deliveries.

The situation in southern Sudan is one of the world's most devastating humanitarian tragedies. The resolution adopted today can help lead to an improvement of that situation, provided the Government of Sudan takes significant and concrete steps towards facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all those who need it.

Finally, the United States delegation would like to recognize the extraordinary efforts of the Permanent Representative of Denmark, Ambassador Jørgen Bøjer, in guiding us to the carefully negotiated consensus on this resolution.

Mr. Manz (Austria): The European Union appreciates that it was possible to adopt the resolution "Emergency assistance to the Sudan" without a vote, thereby discontinuing a pattern of disagreement on resolutions on this subject over recent years.

The European Union considers that the text before us is a marked improvement with regard to previous years. It takes the situation on the ground into consideration and reflects agreements on international humanitarian law and principles. The European Union hopes that the consensus reached will have a positive impact on the work of Operation Lifeline Sudan and of other international humanitarian organizations in the Sudan, and on the efforts of all parties to the conflict to achieve a lasting peaceful solution. In this context, the European Union calls for an early resolution of the conflict and expresses grave concern about the threat to and suffering of the civilian population, which undermines the effectiveness of international, regional and national humanitarian assistance.

The European Union attaches particular importance to the emphasis in the resolution on the need for Operation Lifeline Sudan to be operated and managed with a view to ensuring its efficiency, transparency and effectiveness. We also welcome the reference in the resolution to the role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in strengthening the coordination of Operation Lifeline Sudan. While acknowledging the progress made in this respect in some areas, we expect to see further improvements in the management and operation of Operation Lifeline Sudan in the months ahead.

The European Union was working intensively to achieve a consensus on this resolution and thanks all negotiating partners for the spirit of cooperation shown during negotiations. I want to thank, in particular, Ambassador Jørgen Bøjer of Denmark, who has coordinated all resolutions under this item and has put

considerable time and effort into finding an agreement on this resolution.

Ms. McVey (Canada): Canada is pleased that after two years the resolution on emergency assistance to the Sudan has been adopted by consensus.

In any negotiation there is a process of give and take, of compromise and agreement, and this is understood by all delegations. It is the position of the delegation of Canada that any change in the management of Operation Lifeline Sudan is subject to the concurrence of all the signatories to the agreement establishing Operation Lifeline Sudan, and its management and operation should be conducted accordingly. Likewise, we believe that Operation Lifeline Sudan should be conducted in a non-political manner and in strict accordance with humanitarian principles. We note with satisfaction that this year's text makes solid reference to the importance of safe and unhindered access by humanitarian workers to all populations in need.

As Operation Lifeline Sudan constitutes the basic framework for humanitarian assistance to the Sudan, it is therefore paramount that all parties in the Sudan operate in accordance with the 1994 tripartite Agreements and that the principles and guidelines of Operation Lifeline Sudan, as well as the principles contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182, are duly respected by all parties to ensure the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, impartiality and neutrality of the operation.

As in the past, Canada will continue to fully support the humanitarian work of Operation Lifeline Sudan. We have been encouraged by recent developments such as the October extension of the humanitarian ceasefire and the November signing of the security and transportation protocols by all parties in Rome. In this regard, we urge the Government of the Sudan to extend the ceasefire in terms of duration and of geographic boundaries to include the region of the Nuba mountains. In recognizing that the humanitarian situation in the Sudan is the result of the ongoing civil war, we urge all parties to the conflict to seek its early resolution.

We proffer our gratitude to the delegation of Denmark, and in particular to Ambassador Jørgen Bøjer for the very constructive role he played as facilitator in these negotiations.

It is the belief of my delegation that humanitarian assistance is most effective when national, regional and international efforts converge. Only through concerted action and international cooperation can the obstacles to the provision of humanitarian assistance to all populations in need be overcome.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

I know call on the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): First, I would like to thank the Chairman of the African Group for the Group's submission of this draft resolution which he was kind enough to introduce on the Group's behalf.

I also would like to thank all the parties that succeeded in bringing this draft resolution to the Assembly by consensus, and all those who made efforts to that end.

My delegation also has cooperated in this area, and I would like here to reaffirm my country's complete commitment to the basic principles for the sake of which we attained this resolution relating to the humanitarian conditions in the Sudan.

We would also like to reaffirm our commitment to meet our obligations, to ensure all means of access to all regions and to allow all humanitarian assistance to reach all quarters of the Sudan.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): Resolution 53/10 having been adopted, I would like to say a special word of thanks to the coordinator of the consultations on agenda item 20. I am sure members will join me, on behalf of the General Assembly, in thanking Ambassador Jørgen Bøjer of Denmark, who undertook the long and arduous task of holding consultations and negotiations on the resolutions adopted under agenda item 20.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20.

Agenda item 58 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Draft decision (A/53/L.68)

Draft resolution (A/53/L.74)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): Before we proceed further, I should like to inform members that it is my understanding further consultations are needed regarding draft resolution A/53/L.74. Action on draft resolution A/53/L.74 will therefore be taken at a later date to be announced.

I now give the floor to the representative of Canada to introduce draft decision A/53/L.68.

Ms. McVey (Canada): It is an honour to present for the consideration of the Assembly the draft decision entitled "Non-governmental organizations", as contained in document A/53/L.68.

As requested in last year's decision 52/453 on this very same topic, the Secretary-General prepared a report on the arrangements and practices for the interaction of non-governmental organizations in all activities of the United Nations system. His report provided a much needed basis of pertinent information and analysis, as well as a good overview of existing institutional arrangements for the participation of non-governmental organizations in the United Nations system.

In considering next steps, my delegation endeavoured to consult as widely as possible with all interested parties, delegations and non-governmental organizations alike. It was generally agreed that the Secretary-General should be requested to solicit the views of States, members of specialized agencies, observers, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations from all regions on the broad range of aspects on the question of the participation of non-governmental organizations in the United Nations system, and subsequently to prepare a follow-up report to circulate to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

This is the essential purpose of the draft decision before the Assembly. It would be my delegation's hope and expectation that the Secretary-General's follow-up report would equip the Assembly to consider concrete measures next year to enhance the cooperation between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

I wish to thank all our partners for their contributions and engagement in this issue. The collaboration and commitment expressed by all portend well for strengthened collaboration between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations from all parts of the world.

With these brief comments, I am honoured to commend the draft decision before us for the Assembly's adoption by consensus, as agreed during informal consultations.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft decision A/53/L.68, entitled "Non-governmental organizations".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision?

Draft decision A/53/L.68 was adopted.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 58.

Postponement of date of recess

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): Members will recall that at its 84th plenary meeting, on 9 December 1998, the General Assembly decided that the fifty-third session should recess on 17 December 1998.

However, as the Fifth Committee, despite its best efforts, has not been able to complete its work, the Assembly will not be able to conclude its work today, 17 December 1998. I should like, therefore, to propose to the Assembly that it postpone its date of recess until tomorrow, Friday, 18 December 1998.

If there is no objection, may I take it that the Assembly agrees to this proposal?

It was so decided.

Statement by the President

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): As this is the last meeting over which I will preside in 1998, before we continue our work next year, I should like to take this opportunity to make a statement in my capacity as President of the General Assembly. I do not wish to make a lengthy closing statement, but simply to offer a

review of sorts of some of the aspects of our work before we return to our countries and homes.

I think we can feel legitimate satisfaction about the work we have done. Both in the plenary meetings of the Assembly and in its Committees, the pace of our work has been very intense and has often demanded very long and tiring days of delegations. However, the results are gratifying.

The General Assembly had 168 items on its agenda, and up until 15 December had adopted 250 resolutions and 70 decisions during this first part of the fifty-third session, the content of many of which was politically significant. It would not be appropriate for us to evaluate our work at this point, but I would at least like to refer to some elements of the environment in which that work took place.

The first element is the ongoing dire financial situation of the United Nations, despite which the Organization nevertheless continues to survive and carry out its commitments. Unfortunately, this factor has not been a characteristic solely of this session. It has been dragging on for several years. Needless to say, this has a negative effect on the work and results of deliberations on several important issues. We hope that the most important States in arrears will soon make their required payments without conditions and that future sessions will not take place under the tyranny of financial limitations.

On the other hand, a great spirit of cooperation and compromise on the part of all delegations prevailed in our deliberations. Thanks to that spirit of cooperation, even controversial deliberations were carried out without serious problems. Although delegations put forward and defended their positions energetically and some tensions arose at times, there was always an effort to find consensus and reconciliation of opposing interests. Proof of this is the fact that there have been 190 adoptions by consensus to date at this session. For this I wish in particular to thank all delegations and congratulate them on that spirit of cooperation, which we hope will spread throughout the entire Organization.

Perhaps I can single out some of the resolutions adopted at this session as illustrations of the spirit of understanding and tolerance that seems to be progressively permeating the international community. I am speaking of resolution 53/22, on dialogue among civilizations. In adopting this resolution the General Assembly opened up another path towards strengthening understanding and solidarity among the peoples of the world.

Similarly, resolution 53/30, on the question of equitable representation on the Security Council, can also be taken as an example of how much can be achieved when there is genuine will to understand each other and to make reciprocal concessions through compromise. I need not point out the importance and extreme complexity of the issue of equitable representation on the Security Council. Of course, there was no expectation of making spectacular progress on the substance of this issue at this session. I do hope that progress can be made in that direction next year in the meetings of the Open-ended Working Group. But resolution 53/30, which was adopted by the General Assembly by consensus and whose importance is in inverse proportion to its brevity, will undoubtedly be a contributing element to establishing a climate of mutual confidence and thus promote the development of what I hope will be fruitful negotiations.

We should stress that the General Assembly has paid particular attention to questions of peace and security on the African continent.

With the adoption of the resolution on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, the General Assembly not only confirmed the particular interest and concern of the entire international community about current problems in that region, but also tried to contribute effectively to improving this situation.

Unfortunately, this year nature demonstrated its violent side in many parts of the world. The General Assembly has responded to the best of its undoubtedly limited abilities, but in any case the resolutions it has adopted bear witness to the international community's very strong sense of solidarity, which has withstood all these disasters.

In the areas of disarmament and international security, interest was focused, quite naturally, on nuclear issues because of events that took place this year in this field. All are aware of this. Among the 48 resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the First Committee, I wish to emphasize that condemning nuclear testing in South-East Asia, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda".

Once again this year, a resolution was also adopted that opens the way for the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The consensus adoption of this resolution showed the

world's readiness for such a session. We hope that any remaining reservations in this respect can be overcome and that the special session on disarmament can be held in the near future.

The number of resolutions adopted on the recommendation of the Second Committee rose to 35; all of these, except one on Palestine, were adopted by consensus. The dominant theme in the Second Committee was globalization. The high-level dialogue that took place in September on this issue undoubtedly contributed to a better understanding of this phenomenon, which seems to be emerging as the main issue for the international community on the eve of the twenty-first century. The resolution adopted in this regard recognizes the central role which the United Nations must play and the need for coordination between the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the international organizations. It highlights the growing acceptance of the fact that the United Nations is the appropriate forum in which to hold a dialogue on development issues, with an impact on the discussions that may take place in the Bretton Woods institutions. The dialogue between the intergovernmental bodies, the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions should continue, exploiting the experience of the high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council that took place in April this year.

Another central issue was that of financing for development. Broad consensus has emerged on the need for genuine cooperation and collaboration in the process and on the urgency of achieving an agreement as soon as possible on the agenda of the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on the high-level intergovernmental consideration of this issue.

In the field of cooperation on social, humanitarian and cultural affairs, 59 resolutions were adopted, most by consensus. Also in this area, concern was expressed about the current economic situation and its negative impact on social development. Several resolutions were adopted with respect to human rights. Among these, we would highlight the adoption of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the resolution confirming commitments undertaken in the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Another resolution that deserves mention is the one on international cooperation against the world drug problem.

In the area of special political and decolonization issues, 27 resolutions were adopted, 12 by consensus. In addition to the resolutions on the usual decolonization issues, the effects of atomic radiation, international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space and questions relating to information, resolutions were adopted on two hotly debated questions: the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the question of Israeli practices in the occupied territories. The Organization's financial crisis and difficulties in completing the peace process were the aspects most stressed. The Wye River Memorandum brought a positive element to this process.

Nothing can be said with respect to administrative and budgetary affairs, since the deliberations have been extended. Of course, the issues addressed, such as the programme budget for the 2000-2001 biennium, the first programme of results for the 1998-1999 biennium, the scale of assessments and other matters eloquently illustrate the complexity of the Fifth Committee's work. Among the issues to be discussed next year are human resources, the development account, the reform of the budgeting system, internal oversight services and all issues related to peacekeeping operations and the United Nations procurement system.

The General Assembly adopted 13 resolutions on the recommendation of the Sixth Committee, among which we would highlight that on assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions. Of particular importance was the adoption of a decision providing for the convening next year of three meetings of the Preparatory Commission for the establishment of the International Criminal Court. Equally important is the resolution confirming a number of principles of international law to be observed in the conduct of negotiations. Other resolutions were adopted on the United Nations Decade of International Law. In this area, the work on one important subject — the draft convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism — was not concluded. Most provisions of the draft enjoy general support, but others require additional negotiations. We hope that they will be concluded successfully next year.

This was a year of important celebrations. The fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was the occasion for the adoption of two important resolutions: that on the human rights defenders, to which I referred earlier, and that reaffirming the

General Assembly's solemn commitment to implementing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations and as a source of inspiration. The General Assembly also celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of peacekeeping operations, which offered us the opportunity to reaffirm that the United Nations continues and should continue to be a fundamental pillar of the maintenance of international peace and security throughout the world.

In conclusion — and I apologize for perhaps having spoken too long — I wish to return to my initial point. I believe that this has been a fruitful session, for which all members may take credit. I wish particularly to thank the Vice-Presidents, who took my place on many occasions, and the Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteurs of the Committees, who also did excellent work. Of course, we could not have achieved the positive results I have summarized without the invaluable and constant support and professionalism of the staff of the Secretariat and the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services. I wish in particular to mention the interpreters and translators, who have had to struggle with my Spanish, and the Meetings Coverage Section of the Department of Public Information. To all these, and those whom I have not mentioned, I offer my deep gratitude and that of my team.

I wish very happy holidays to all and a year full of professional and personal success in 1999. I will return in February, when we shall resume our work with the same determination which we have shown to date.

Programme of work

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should now like to make an announcement in connection with sub-item (b) of agenda item 91, entitled "Financing of development, including net transfer of resources between developing and developed countries".

Members will recall that at its 91st plenary meeting, on 15 December 1998, the General Assembly adopted resolution 53/173 under that sub-item. Paragraph 4 of resolution 53/173 requests the President of the General Assembly, in close consultations with Member States, to designate two vice-chairpersons for the ad hoc working group established under resolution 52/179, preferably before the convening of its organizational meeting in January 1999.

In this connection, I should like to announce that the first organizational meeting of the ad hoc working group will take place immediately after the adjournment of this plenary meeting, here in the General Assembly Hall.

I should also like to make an announcement concerning agenda item 31, entitled "Culture of peace". I have been informed by the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh that more time is needed for consultations on a draft resolution under this agenda item. It is envisaged that further consultations will be held early next year and that they will again be coordinated by the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.

United Nations

A/53/PV.93

General Assembly

Fifty-third Session

Official Records

93rd plenary meeting
Friday, 18 December 1998, 8 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Jemat (Brunei Darussalam), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 8.15 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Note by the Secretary-General (A/53/701)

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly decides that the International Organization of la Francophonie will participate, in the capacity of observer, in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly and of its subsidiary organs, instead of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, which had been invited to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly and of its subsidiary organs in the capacity of observer by General Assembly resolution 33/18 of 10 November 1978?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 20 and 45 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(c) Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Draft resolution (A/53/L.66)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/753)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/53/L.66, which is in two parts. Part A is entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security", and Part B is entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan".

I should like to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/53/L.66, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Fiji, Honduras, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/53/L.66 is contained in document A/53/753.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/53/L.66?

Draft resolution A/53/L.66 was adopted (resolutions 53/203 A and B).

98-86734 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 20?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Moreover, the General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 45.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee an agenda items 17 (k), 111, 112, 114, 116 to 121, 123, 135, 137, 143 (a) and 113.

I request the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Tammam Sulaiman of the Syrian Arab Republic, to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee (*interpretation from Arabic*): I have the honour today to present to the General Assembly the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items allocated to it. Members will recall that 37 items were allocated for consideration by the Fifth Committee. The Committee considered 24 items during the main part of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly. The remaining items allocated to the Committee will be considered during the resumed fifty-third session.

From 5 October to 15 December 1998, the Fifth Committee held 45 meetings. Moreover, negotiations were carried out in the course of numerous informal consultations. I shall today give a brief report on the results of the work of the Fifth Committee.

Let me recall first of all that the Fifth Committee has already submitted reports under a number of items that were considered in October and November, including the following. Under agenda item 112, "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the Committee has reported on administrative arrangements for the International Trade Centre, on the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), on the World Trade Organization, on gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities, and on the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on its activities during the fifty-second session. Under agenda item 113, "Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999", the Committee has reported on the programme budget implications of the special session of the Committee on Contributions in 1999 and on the savings achieved from the ninth session of UNCTAD, as well as on the programme budget implications of draft resolution I recommended by the Third Committee in its report contained in document A/53/623, entitled "International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination", and of draft resolution A/53/L.20 on the situation in Central America, entitled "United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala".

Under agenda item 118, "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", requests for exemption to Article 19 have been made by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq and Tajikistan.

Other agenda items mainly relate to peacekeeping operations, such as agenda item 125, "Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara"; agenda item 136, "Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan"; item 140, "Financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force"; and the support account for peacekeeping operations under agenda item 143, "Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations".

I shall now present to the General Assembly the reports of the Fifth Committee on the items considered during the last weeks of its session.

Regarding agenda item 17 (k), entitled "Appointment of a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/53/752. In paragraph 5 of that report, the Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the appointment of Mr. Kenshiro Akimoto to fill the unexpired portion of the term of office of a member who has resigned. Mr. Akimoto's nomination was made in the Committee by acclamation.

In relation to agenda item 111, entitled "Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/53/738. In paragraph 9 of the report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which the Fifth Committee adopted without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 112, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/53/521/Add.1. In paragraph 12 the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution regarding the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2000-2001, and the adoption of two draft decisions, which concern, respectively, the action taken on certain agenda items and relevant reports of the Committee and the biennial programme of work for the Fifth Committee. The draft resolution and the two draft decisions were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 113, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/53/485/Add.1. Under this agenda item, the Committee adopted two draft resolutions — draft resolution I, which deals with questions relating to the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, and draft resolution II, dealing with the programme budget for the biennium for the period 1998-1999. I wish to inform the Assembly that A/C.5/53/L.27 will be amended to reflect the actual work of the Committee. In addition, the seventh part of the first draft resolution concerning the programme on administrative information will be replaced with the text contained in A/C.5/53/L.32, which shows the consensus reached in the informal consultations on the integrated information system. This text was issued in A/C.5/53/L.27 and adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Turning to agenda item 114, entitled "Programme planning", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/53/743. In paragraph 8 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 116, entitled "Administrative and budgetary coordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/53/713. In paragraph 5 of that report, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the budgetary and financial situation of organizations of the United Nations system and the relevant paragraphs of the first report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The draft decision was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Under agenda item 117, entitled "Pattern of conferences", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/53/744. In paragraph 7 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Regarding agenda item 118, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/53/464/Add.3. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Turning to agenda item 119, entitled "Human resources management", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/53/748. In paragraph 9 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 120, entitled "United Nations common system", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/53/754. In paragraph 7 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Turning to agenda item 121, entitled "United Nations pension system", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/53/736. In paragraph 8 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Regarding agenda item 123, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission and the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/53/745. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Under agenda item 135, entitled "Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/53/755. In

paragraph 6 of the report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution that was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to all the members of the Fifth Committee who contributed to the successful conclusion of this part of our work and to all the members of the Secretariat for the valuable assistance they provided to facilitate our work.

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

Agenda item 17 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(k) Appointment of a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/752)

The Acting President: In paragraph 5 of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly should appoint Mr. Kenshiro Akimoto as a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee for the remainder of a term of office beginning on 1 January 1999 and ending on 31 December 2000.

May I take it that the General Assembly appoints that person?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 17.

Agenda item 111

Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/738)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 9 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/204).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 111.

Agenda item 112 (*continued*)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/521/Add.1)

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolutions contained in paragraph 18 of the Committee's report. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Shearouse (United States of America): The United States cannot join the agreement reached on the $2.545 billion budget outlined for the biennium 2000-2001. We do not accept a budget outline level that is both greater than the current budget level and much more than is necessary to carry out all mandated programmes efficiently and effectively. It is our belief that an outline level equal to or lower than the current budget would have enabled full implementation of mandated activities, including real increases in several priority areas; reflected the likelihood of at least $20 million in efficiency savings in the next biennium as a result of improvements in efficiencies in United Nations operations; and provided resources for the special political missions that may be undertaken during the course of the budget period.

Despite clear indications that a budget less than the current level would be sufficient for the next biennium, the proposed resolution endorses an outline level that substantially exceeds this. Actual spending for the first year of the current biennium was well below the approved budget level. To increase the projected expenditure level above the current approved level, which itself exceeds the actual spending pattern, is simply irresponsible.

We also cannot agree to a budget outline that rejects the Secretary-General's proposal to achieve $20 million in savings through efficiency gains — a tiny amount when compared with the overall budget total. This capricious approach goes against Article 97 of the United Nations Charter, which gives the Secretary-General responsibility for administering the Organization in the most efficient and effective ways possible.

In truth, any budget totalling $2.5 billion would easily contain substantially more than $20 million in savings opportunities. The original proposal would have made such savings a distinct part of the budget proposal. While this approach was not embraced, we fully expect the Secretary-General to identify efficiency savings when proposing his budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

Approving a higher budget outline level than is justified on technical and programmatic grounds has set an unfortunate precedent. Given this situation, one can only conclude that there are other forces at play that gave rise to such an extraordinary and expensive action.

We would only add that we look forward to reviewing the Secretary-General's detailed budget estimates next year. These estimates should fully reflect the benefits of the reform and efficiency measures while also providing a realistic perspective on the United Nations resource requirements for the biennium.

Mr. Watanabe (Japan): Just for the record, my delegation would like to state the following concerning draft resolution II. The Government of Japan cannot accept the figure of $2.545 billion outlined for the biennium 2000-2001 because of the reasons stated in the Fifth Committee this afternoon. However, my delegation will not block the adoption without a vote of the draft resolution.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 18 of its report (A/53/521/Add.1) and on the six draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 19 of the same report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Results-based budgeting", which the Fifth Committee adopted without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/205).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2000-2001", which, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/53/L.33. The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/206).

The Acting President: We will now turn to the six draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 19 of its report (A/53/521/Add.1).

The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision I, entitled "Revolving credit fund", without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision II, entitled "Administrative arrangements for the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO", without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision III, entitled "Guidelines for Internal Control Standards", without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision III was adopted.

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision IV, entitled "Impact of the implementation of pilot projects on budgetary practices and procedures", without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft decision IV was adopted.

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision V, entitled "Biennial programme of work of the Fifth Committee for 1999-2000", without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft decision V was adopted.

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision VI, entitled "Items for consideration by the Fifth Committee during the resumed fifty-third session of the General Assembly", without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision VI was adopted.

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolutions just adopted.

May I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Powles (New Zealand): This brief explanation of position on the resolution on results-based budgeting is being delivered on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In addition, the delegations of the following countries have asked to be associated with it: the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu — in all, 10 Member States.

Our delegations have joined in the consensus on the resolution on results-based budgeting in support of the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that the Secretary-General should provide additional prototype budget fascicles in a results-based budgeting format. We believe that, in order for the General Assembly to have more technical information at hand when considering this matter next year, paragraph 7 of the resolution is essential.

Our delegations also agreed with the wish of other delegations that the Secretary-General should provide additional justification for his recommendation to move to results-based budgeting. However, our delegations retain some concern that many of the paragraphs in this resolution seem to prejudge the outcome of the comparative analysis that the General Assembly is requesting of the Secretary-General.

It is our delegations' hope that, when the General Assembly takes up this matter again at its fifty-fourth session, the receipt of additional information requested will foster a well-informed and constructive discussion on results-based budgeting. This discussion should be based on technical aspects, but, at the same time, it affects the future health of this Organization.

Our delegations would be grateful if the Secretary-General would note that, while there is understandable uncertainty on the part of some delegations concerning his recommendation in the United Nations reform programme on results-based budgeting, there is also firm and unwavering support for the concept on the part of many delegations. We reiterate here the utmost importance that our delegations attach to the proper consideration of results-based budgeting in the United Nations.

Like other Member States, we seek a more credible United Nations. We fear that, if the United Nations management and administrative machinery is not modernized and strengthened, this Organization runs a serious risk of being unable to respond to the growing needs of the international community in the new century. If that were to be the case, all Member States would suffer, particular developing countries and small States. My own country is obviously in that category. We are the ones that rely most on the United Nations.

Therefore, our delegations will continue to support the gradual transition to a results-based budgeting system for the United Nations, for it is in this system that the seeds of a much more effective Organization can be found.

Mr. Schlesinger (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The General Assembly adopted resolution 41/213 because it wished to improve the financial and administrative functioning of the Organization and to facilitate the agreement among Member States on the programme budget. The concept of a budget outline was introduced and has since been a pillar of the budgetary process. It is for this reason that we attach great importance to it. The European Union was therefore pleased to join consensus on the present resolution after much work and welcome flexibility on the part of many delegations to reach the broadest possible agreement.

This is not to say that we were fully satisfied with all elements of the text. In particular, like others, we would have preferred to have retained in the outline the $20 million which the Secretary-General expects to be able to save through economies achieved by intense scrutiny of the programme budget. It is our view that this is by no means an unreasonable target for such economies in a budget of this size and we trust that the Secretary-General will continue to apply such scrutiny when preparing the budget he will propose next year. Of course, it goes without saying that such economies should be sought only in the context of full and effective financing for the implementation of mandated programmes and activities.

We welcome the resolution we have just adopted, which reaffirms General Assembly resolution 41/213. It effectively reverses calls for deviations made in the past for political reasons. In this context, we are particularly pleased to see the reaffirmation that a contingency fund in the amount of 0.75 per cent is additional to the overall budget figure, as specified in resolution 41/213. We also appreciate that the budget outline now contains a provision for special missions, as recommended by the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee.

The European Union has long agreed with the view of the Secretary-General that previous arrangements in this regard were an unsatisfactory basis for organizing the future management of resources for such missions.

It is unfortunate that some delegations remain unhappy with this resolution, which was adopted without a vote. But we expect that the procedures stipulated in resolution 41/213 and the spirit of consensus underpinning it will continue to guide our work when we come to discuss the Secretary-General's budget proposal, for which this resolution provides an indicative planning estimate.

Ms. Buergo Rodríguez (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation joined the consensus on resolution 53/206 on the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2000-2001, which we have just adopted.

However, my delegation would like to make a few brief comments, particularly in connection with some concerns expressed by my delegation during the informal consultations, which, in the interest of consensus, we did not press.

First of all, we would like to reaffirm that the budget outline is a preliminary estimate of resources, and is in no way a budget ceiling. Furthermore, we note the inclusion in the total amount approved of an amount relating to special political missions, which in our opinion departs from the provisions established in resolution 41/213. That issue will have to be considered very carefully in the future.

Finally, my delegation is concerned about the trend towards a diminution of the resources of the Organization and the increasing difficulty of ensuring sufficient resources to allow for the complete and proper implementation of all the mandates, activities and programmes in the medium-term plan. In this context, my delegation hopes that during negotiations next session under the item on the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, the General Assembly will be able to ensure and approve the amount of resources really necessary to implement all of the mandated activities and programmes of the Organization.

Ms. Wensley (Australia): I am pleased to join the hard-working Fifth Committee experts at this important plenary meeting. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the delegations of Canada, New Zealand and Australia in explanation of position following the adoption of the draft resolution, contained in the Fifth Committee's report, on the proposed budget outline for the biennium 2000-2001.

The adoption of an outline for the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 represents an important first stage in the budgetary process. It sets the parameters within which the Secretary-General will prepare his budget proposals for the next biennium. In providing an indicative level of the next budget, it can be a critical planning tool for Member States. We are pleased that, for the first time, the outline includes a provision for special political missions. This will ensure a reliable funding base for these important activities and reduce the extent to which Member States could face unforeseen expenditures during the biennium. This, we believe, is a significant enhancement of the budgetary process.

Our three delegations are disappointed, however, that the outline does not take into account the efficiencies of $20 million proposed by the Secretary-General. We considered the amount of $20 million to be modest in a budget of more than $2.5 billion. Nevertheless, it is our understanding that the Secretary-General will pursue gains in productivity in the preparation of the next budget and subsequently in its implementation. We look forward to the results of that effort.

A key element of the outline is the preliminary estimate of the resource requirements for the next biennium. We note that the figure contained in resolution 53/206 is higher than the current level of appropriations and — I want to emphasize this — higher than our delegations consider to be financially prudent, particularly given the financial climate in some parts of the world. We recognize that agreement on the estimate was reached after sensitive and difficult negotiations, which entailed significant concessions from many delegations. However, the fact that the preliminary estimate was too high to be endorsed by the United States and Japan is a source of serious concern for our delegations. We believe that the very legitimate concerns of those two Member States, which together contribute 45 per cent of the total resources of this Organization, need to be addressed. We believe it important for this to be done in the context of next year's negotiations on the programme budget for 2000-2001 and, for our part, we are prepared to work to help bring that about.

Our delegations remain strongly committed to strengthening the effectiveness and the work of the United Nations. We view fiscal restraint and the focused use of resources as essential elements in the broader reform process. We trust that, in preparing the budget based on the outline adopted today, the Secretary-General will consolidate his reforms and continue to work actively and energetically to streamline processes and structures to allow more resources to be invested in substantive programmes.

Mr. Jaremczuk (Poland): My delegation wishes to inform the Assembly that we have decided to align ourselves with the statement made earlier by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote. We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 112.

Agenda item 114

Programme planning

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/743)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/207).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 114.

Agenda item 116

Administrative and budgetary coordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/713)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of its report.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 116?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 117

Pattern of conferences

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/744)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/208).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 117.

Agenda item 118 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/464/Add.3)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolutions 53/36 B to E).

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Manz (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area — Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway — align themselves with this statement.

First, I would like to thank the representative of Ireland, Mr. Frank Smyth, for his outstanding work as coordinator of this resolution.

The European Union is pleased that we have adopted by consensus resolutions 53/36 B to E, dealing with the report of the Committee on Contributions, whose good work is rightly acknowledged. There remains, however, much more to be done in pursuit of the European Union's long-held objective of making the system of financing our Organization both more transparent and more equitable.

It is right that the Committee on Contributions should be instructed to look at ways in which the application of Article 19 might be tightened. By this we mean that the effective arrears period should be brought into line with the original intent of those who drafted this Article. Member States should risk the sanction of the loss of their vote in the General Assembly if they are in default of their obligations after a real two-year period, not the almost three years that presently applies.

It is for this reason that we would like to see the Committee on Contributions give specific advice on the impact of doing the calculation twice a year rather than just once, in early January, as is currently the case. We also believe that it should look closely at the consequences of using net rather than gross figures in the calculation.

The European Union continues to believe that it is fundamentally unacceptable that so many Member States should make a habit of systematically being in arrears. Too many deliberately pay at the last possible moment; some make no payments at all. In such circumstances, we look to the Committee on Contributions for advice on what measures might be imposed to serve as a real disincentive to such poor performance.

I have already recalled that it has long been an important objective of the European Union to make the scales of assessment more equitable. In this context, we regret that we were once again prevented from even discussing our proposals to bring a more rational system to bear on the financing of peacekeeping operations. We believe that the technical advice of the Committee on Contributions would be valuable in this area and find it unacceptable that a straightforward request for the Committee's help should effectively be blocked by one group of Member States.

Under the current system for financing United Nations peacekeeping operations, group D countries receive a 90 per cent discount and group C countries a discount of 80 per cent. It is not this particular system which itself gives us great cause for concern at this stage. Indeed, we want to discuss how it might be improved. Rather, we are concerned by the fact that too many countries continue to receive an 80 per cent discount as a result of a calculation of their relative share of world gross national product in 1973, some 25 years ago. We believe that it is unacceptable that some of these countries continue to gain an unwarranted subsidy at the expense not only of those that pay fully and promptly, but also of those countries that — were there to be a change to the group system — would deservedly benefit from it.

In the parliaments of the countries of the European Union, this situation is increasingly being questioned. It is not something that should be allowed to continue. Moreover, we are not prepared to accept that we are denied an opportunity to discuss the problem. We reserve the right to return to this issue at the resumed fifty-third session, under agenda item 143, "Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations".

Mr. Atiyanto (Indonesia): Allow me to state the following on behalf of my colleagues members of the Group of 77 and China.

The Group of 77 and China joined the consensus on the adoption of this resolution, but not without great disappointment. We are very much concerned about the spirit under which this resolution was negotiated. Therefore, we are of the view that any mistrust and doubt should be avoided. Furthermore, we continue to hold our long-standing view that it is irrelevant to link the discussion of this agenda item with the special scale for the peacekeeping operations budget.

We are also of the view that the Committee on Contributions does not have the mandate to discuss the special scale for the peacekeeping operations budget. This is particularly true in the light of the observation contained in paragraph 93 of the report of the Committee on Contributions (A/53/11), and as referred to and explained by the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions during the negotiations in the informal consultations. Therefore, we are strongly against any attempt to include the provision concerning the scale of assessments for peacekeeping budgets in this resolution.

We would also like to say that the Group of 77 and China will continue to be vigilant in its principled position, as guided by the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the twenty-second annual meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 118.

Agenda item 119 (*continued*)

Human resources management

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/748)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 9 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 119.

Agenda item 120

United Nations common system

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/754)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/209).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 120.

Agenda item 121

United Nations pension system

Reports of the Fifth Committee (A/53/736, A/53/737)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report (A/53/736). The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/53/737.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/210).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 121.

Agenda item 123

Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission and the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/745)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola" without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/211).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 123.

Agenda item 135

Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/755)

The Acting President: The Assembly will take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/53/755).

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/212).

The Acting President: Before calling on the representative who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted, let me remind representatives that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats. I call on the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Orlov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): In the light of the need for a swift decision on the financing of the Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the delegation of the Russian Federation joined the consensus on this resolution. However, with respect to paragraph 5, which relates to a recommendation by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the convening of a group of independent experts to evaluate the operations of the Tribunal, the Russian delegation continues to have serious doubts about the need for such a group and about its mandate. In our view, the mandate of the group of experts should not go beyond administrative and budgetary issues. The work of that group must not infringe on areas that lie exclusively within the competence of the Security Council. We are firmly convinced that only the Security Council, which established the Tribunal, has the right to evaluate its operations from the political or legal standpoint and to carry out effective monitoring of its functioning.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 135.

Agenda item 137

Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/756)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Uganda on a point of order.

Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo (Uganda): I wish to make a correction to paragraph 5 of the draft resolution recommended in paragraph 6 of the report of the Fifth Committee. The reference to "paragraph 3 above" should be changed to "paragraph 4 above".

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended in paragraph 6 of the report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/756), as orally corrected. The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft resolution, as orally corrected?

The draft resolution, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 53/213).

The Acting President: Before calling on representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted, let me remind members that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Orlov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): In the light of the need for a swift decision on the financing of the Tribunal for Rwanda, the delegation of the Russian Federation joined the consensus on this resolution. However, with respect to paragraph 4, which relates to a recommendation by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the convening of a group of independent experts to evaluate the operations of the Tribunal, the Russian delegation continues to have serious doubts about the need for such a group and about its mandate. In our view, the mandate of the group of experts should not go beyond

administrative and budgetary issues. The work of that group must not infringe on areas that lie exclusively within the competence of the Security Council. We are firmly convinced that only the Security Council, which established the Tribunal, has the right to evaluate its operations from the political or legal standpoint and to carry out effective monitoring of its functioning.

Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo (Uganda): I wish to thank the representative of New Zealand, who did a wonderful job of coordinating the item on which the Assembly has just taken a decision. My delegation has a particular interest in this item and would therefore like to make some brief comments. We are particularly happy to note that the General Assembly has taken the decision to establish an expert group to evaluate the operation and functioning of the Tribunals for Rwanda and for the former Yugoslavia. It is the view of my delegation that the expert group will be able to assess the effectiveness of the Tribunals and the way in which they have been functioning since their establishment. We hope that its report will be useful in helping all the concerned organs of the United Nations as they try to take the steps necessary to improve the effective functioning of the Tribunals.

We are also happy to note that the resolution we have just adopted takes note that efforts are being made by the Office of Human Resources Management to review the current remuneration package applicable to staff of the Tribunal. We hope that this will go a long way towards encouraging more staff to work in the Tribunal and to fill the vacancies there, which we have noted are very high.

Finally, allow me to say that aspersions have been cast as to the appreciation extended to the management of the Tribunal on the functioning of the Tribunal in Arusha. Those of us who are quite close to the Tribunal and who have been following its development believe that many efforts have been made to try to put it on a proper footing, and although not all is totally perfect, we believe that the efforts made to date should be appreciated. We are very pleased that the Committee and the General Assembly have recognized this effort, and we want to send a clear message to the management of the Tribunal that it should continue its work and strive harder to make the Tribunal more effective.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 137.

Agenda item 143 (*continued*)

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

(a) Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/522/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 4 of its report. The title of the draft decision is as follows: "Death and disability benefits".

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 143.

Agenda item 113 (*continued*)

Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/485/Add.1)

The Acting President: I should like to inform delegations of a technical error concerning the symbol of the Committee's report under this item. The correct symbol of the report should read A/53/485/Add.1, not A/53/757. The final version of the report will be corrected accordingly.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions and the three draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in its report, which, for the time being, are contained in section IV, paragraphs 43 and 44, of document A/C.5/53/L.27.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Questions relating to the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999".

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/214).

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution II, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/215 A to C).

The Acting President: We next turn to the three draft decisions.

The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision I, entitled "Financial arrangements associated with the dining room at the International Court of Justice", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision II, entitled "Relationship between the treatment of perennial activities in the programme budget and the use of the contingency fund", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision III, entitled "Development Account", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 113.

The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of all the reports of the Fifth Committee before it.

Programme of work

The Acting President: With regard to the programme of work of the General Assembly, apart from organizational matters and items that may have to be considered by operation of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, and bearing in mind the action already taken by the Assembly thus far, I should like to propose that the following agenda items remain for consideration during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly: agenda items 10, 11, 16, 17, 20, 30, 31, 38 to 40, 43 to 45, 57 to 62, 93 (f), 94 (c), 108, 111 to 115, 117 to 145, 152, 155, 161, 163, 165 and 167.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that those agenda items remain for consideration during the fifty-third session of the Assembly?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I should like also to inform members that the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council will meet next year from 8 to 19 February.

Finally, before adjourning the meeting I should like to wish all delegations happy holidays, and to our Muslim colleagues a most successful Ramadan.

The meeting rose at 9.25 p.m.